

A walk in the woods

by walkinggarbagebag

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Summary: Hiccup leaves Berk before he has to kill the dragon, and finds a nice new life in the Highlands. One day, Hiccup and Merida meet in a, well, rather unformal way. An immediate friendship ensues, and, well, the rest is history. Mericcup. (My first Merricup fic, neither httyd or Brave belong to me, sadly.) Kinda tapered off in the end, sorry

## 1. Chapter 1

"Leaving. We're leaving. Let's pack up. Looks like you and me are going on a little vacation. Forever." I let the sack of fish slip over my shoulder. I can't believe this is actually happening. \_Me. Kill a dragon.\_ All I've done in the ring is just \_avoid\_ getting killed. I haven't killed a dragon at \_all.\_ Not even when I had Toothless wrapped and perfectly unable to do anything, I couldn't kill a dragon. Now I'm expected to kill one, as my 14 year old pile of all bone and scrawny-ness, in front of the whole village!

I can't even hold a sword above my head, nonetheless swing it. I get up and stroll over to Toothless, who sits over in a dark corner of the sunken valley. He perks up, eyes wide, and I contemplate how nobody has ever realized how gentle these creatures are.

I add the final words to my list, and add the final period with a flourish. I look up at Toothless, and he watches me write, eager to know what is happening. "Hey, bud. This sound good?" he cocks his head, as if to say 'What?' so I start to read off the plan to him.

"Ok. Once it gets dark," I look up. hints of gold and pink start to glaze the edges of clouds. "â€|Which will be soon. I run into town and make some parts for your tail. You're probably going to break some things." And with this, one of his head flaps smacks me. I playfully shove him back, but get back to reading the list to him. "After I get some stuff done at Gobber's, I grab a bag of sheep wool, and we head out right before dawn. Sounds good, bud?" with this,

Toothless makes a throaty gurgle, and I pat his nose. As more and more color bleeds into the sky, I start prepping Toothless for the flight off of Berk.

I causally stroll through the village as the sun goes down on the horizon, knowing full well that nobody will notice me. everybody's too caught up in congratulating my dad how I managed not to turn into an unmanageable hiccup to society. I silently enter into my house and crawl up the steps into my room. Scurrying around my room, I snatch every article of clothing I own and throw it into a sack. I reach for my multiple drawings, but my hand falters. I know I won't be able to take them all. Feeling sadness on leaving so much work behind, I shrink away. Hoisting my bag over my shoulder, I sigh as I walk out of my room for the last time.

After stopping in on my own little hide out, where I had been drawing Toothless when my dad bust in, and I grab all the mechanical drawings for Toothless' tail, and stuff them in the bag too. I made my way to the smith and begin to make more of the stuff for Toothless.

After making the equivalent of two tails, a drunk Gobber saunters in. "Hiccup, what are you doing here?" Gobber slurred.

"I want to make myself a few things for tomorrow." I easily slip out. It's true; I do need them tomorrow, just not for what everybody thinks. Gobber is pretty dumb when he's drunk, which happens quite a bit. So I just usher him out, telling him to "Go back to celebrating, I kinda wanna focus on this. Enjoy yourself Gobber. Bye." And with that, I shut the smith's door, and lock the outside out.

The partying stopped well into the dark of night. Dad knows that I stay out of the house all the time, avoiding him, quite often. A few hours after the quiet settled in, I looked around me. I had about three and a half tails, plus spare small parts, two saddles, and lots of extras. I also managed to snatch quite a bit of food from around the village, and I could see the full moon was starting to near the horizon, and I needed to get out of here before the sun rose. I grabbed the bags, with great difficulty no mind you, and waddled out into the forest to Toothless.

I see Toothless asleep on glowing embers, the things I brought earlier sitting beside him. I sulk over to the big boulder and let the bags drop, and immediately feel a million times lighter. The inky black is starting to fade into a deep blue on the far east, and the moon has sunk below the tree line. It's time to leave.

I load the last of everything on Toothless, who looks a little less than pleased about all the extra weight. But I've seen him carry trees, so I am confident in his flying ability. I toss him one more fish and climb onto his back, and we take off into the black abyss.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN HE'S NOT HERE?" Hiccup was supposed to be back at the arena by noon. It was already late into the night, and there had been no sign of the chief's son since sundown the day before.

"Stoick, calm down, he's probably just hiding."

"GOBBER, HE'S NOT ANYWHERE! I've looked in the smith, the great hall,

the cliff he used to go and sit on, I've asked the kids, I've asked the villagers, nobody has seen him since he was chosen yesterday." By now, Stoick was completely distraught. He sat down abruptly and buried his face in his hands. "Gobber, I lost Valka to the beasts, I can't lose Hiccup too."

"Stoick, I actually saw him yesterday, he was in the smith." Stoick perked up, hope splashed all across his face. "Making lots of odd things. I believe I saw one put together. It looked like a dragon's tail, almost. But it had lots of straps, and I thought I saw him making another saddle. For what, I have no idea, but he made one last week too. I was drunk, though, so I didn't think to ask him." And the hope that remained within the great chief was extinguished.

"He's gone, and I didn't even get to say how proud I was. He was all I had left, Gobber. Now it's all gone." And with that, everybody left the great hall. All who remained in the great building was Stoick, with the torches all burnt out, and the great fire in the pit reduced to measly embers.

It's been two days since I left Berk, all all I've found is just random islands, no bigger than Berk. Toothless and I have landed a few times, to eat and nap, but I can tell Toothless is getting tired. I lay down on Toothless' back, ready for another night, but something stops me. Something that smells a lot like—| cooking meat.

I look down, but see nothing but ocean, and an alert dragon. I lean down to Toothless, "Follow the meat, bud. I'm starving." And with that, I lie down and let the glorious smell of turkey legs and steaks waft into my mind.

About 20 minutes , after following the ever growing scent of delicious, juicy meat, Toothless does his gurgle, and I turn to face forward. On the horizon, sits a large castle atop a cliff. And with the glorious sight of land and the delicious scent of fresh food, we soar through the golden clouds as the sun sinks below the horizon, an over sized pebble in a small puddle.

In the dark of the night, we slowly approach the stone castle. I think this seems like a nice place to stay a while. I steer Toothless away from the castle. If I have to live here, I don't want to be known by the locals. Deep in the woods, there runs a stream that I could live near. I aim Toothless just a little left of the stream, landing in a small field near the bubbling stream. The Night Fury makes a purring noise and I turn around, only to see him rolling around in the grass.

Quickly running over there, I unlatch all the baskets and sacks from off of his back, and he starts running around the field, happy to be free of the weight. Glancing around, I realize we have landed in a giant bowl, similar to the one we left in Berk. But here, the bowl's sides aren't sunken into the earth, with edges of worn rock, but the sides are made of such thick foliage and vines, it is near impossible to see out of, and I'm pretty sure nobody can see in. Comfortable that we are well hidden; I reach inside of one of the bags, and feel around until I feel a few sticks with some canvas over them. I pull out the tent, and set it up, and crawl inside, leaving Toothless outside to play in the small area I'll now be calling home. I hear the bubbling stream, wind through the trees, the stark smell of pine, oak and birch trees, and the faint glow and hum from the castle not

too far away.

## 2. Chapter 2

I stretch, mumbling muttered remarks about how early in the morning it was, and peek open one eye. In my pathetic little cabin, sat an over excited Night Fury, tail wiggling in excitement, with tiny hopping of his front paws. I sit up in my makeshift bed, an attempt at a bed frame with a bunch of dried grass and some wool I stole from a farmer's sheep who got lost in the woods. I saunter out the doorway with Toothless in stow, and hop over the wall of thickets on his back, and walk to the brook while Toothless tries to catch a fish. I quickly take my shirt and shoes off, and slip into the cool water in my pants.

I run my hand through my hair, which I had cut shorter, and it had thickened. Recently, I had a huge jump in growth, raising up a good 2 hand spans of what I was when I first arrived. I guess I filled out my lanky form, cause my arms and legs slowly filled out to less than bony, and I think my shoulders got wider. The shiny new leather flying suit I just finished, with all the glory of my crazy knick knacks, completely accentuates the abrupt change in the years I've been here. I look back on old sketches of myself, the one I brought from Berk, old and tattered from weather, but I compare it to my reflection in the water, and I realize I have changed a lot during my four year stay in the woods of the kingdom of DunBroch.

It's a miracle I found this place, really. I have found plenty of lost farm animals throughout the woods around here, resulting in quite the mediocre farm, between the six or seven sheep, depending on if one finds their way out again, two cows (One of which I may have accidentally stole), and five pigs. I would walk around the market, looking at what each of the farmers had to offer, and would snatch a stray apple every now and then.

I made the acquaintance of three bright triplets, who seemed to have mastered the art of thievery. I would see them in the market every few weeks, and we would set up a hit on the sweets stands. I'd get the lady's attention, asking her about a certain product, say, a small pastry, while the boys appeared from nowhere, then made it out with armfuls of deliciousness. They'd meet me around the side of the castle, near the market, with a few coins, with which I'd get myself some food.

I also introduced myself to the blacksmith, Aodh. It took a few days of smooth talking, but he finally allowed to fix up a bent piece to Toothless' tail piece. I could sense him over my shoulder the whole time, but he looked generally pleased with what I had done. Yet a few more days of persuading, and about six more fixed up metal pieces, and he offered a spot as apprentice. That was about a year ago, so we were what I would call friends.

So here I am, in quite the same position as I was four years ago on Berk. My only friend is the black smith, to whom I am an apprentice, so it's kind of a forced necessity, and I'm unknown to anyone. But this time, it's on my own terms. And I look relatively human compared to most of the people here. Aside from the brutes, who were Viking size.

My mind returns to the current world, me, sitting in the cold river in the heat of summer. As I stare down into the water, mindlessly watching fish swim by, I hear someone coming. My head shoots up, and I lock eyes with Toothless, and in an awkward whisper-shout, tell Toothless to go home. He immediately flaps away into the woods, towards the hut. Once I hear a low warble, signifying Toothless is back at the house, I can breathe easy. I'm just a boy, lost in the woods, rinsing off. I look around, and through the trees, I see a flash of red, blue, and black coming towards the stream.

I sink myself into the water, knowing I'm off the beaten path, which is about 100 feet up river. I watch with only my eyes and the top of my head poking out of the water as a girl on a huge horse whips past the clearing, jumping over the river, and as she jumps, she shoots an arrow into a tree with a bow that I didn't realize she had. I watch in astonishment as the girl continues to zip into the woods, and out of sight.

I feel that there is no more threat of the girl, and I do a low whistle, loud enough only so it will carry to the house. And soon enough, I hear a rustling in the woods, and out pops a black reptile, with piercing green eyes. I hop out of the water, and collect my garments on the river's edge and climb onto Toothless. I almost have it in me to follow the girl, where ever she was going, but I decide against it and head back home.

Hours later, I was walking through the woods in my new flying suit, making a path from the house, directly to the market, when I heard a rustling again in the woods. I had it almost done, I was hacking away with my sword, when I heard the rustle again. I whipped around only to have a slicing pain rip through my arm. I look over to it, and I see my arm, pinned to a tree by an arrow. I look to where the arrow came from, only to be met with a stammering mess of the girl I saw on the horse from earlier.

She stumbled, dropped her bow, all while stammering, and looked me dead in the eyes and said "You're a person. I shot a person." And promptly fell to the ground as she fainted.

And here I am, pinned to a tree by an arrow through my arm, and the passed out shooter of said arrow 20 feet away. I look to my pinned limb, and come to the conclusion that it's not deep, so it isn't seriously injured, and I can still use my hand, so there's nothing wrong with it. Just a little pinch at the top of the skin.

I close my eyes, and take a few breathes, and yank the arrow out of the tree. I move my right arm all around, and determine it's still usable, just a flesh wound, with a very ornamental decoration to it. I walk over to the girl. She landed rather ungracefully, face down, in the dirt. She has bright red, flaming curls surrounding her like a majestic mane. Her teal dress has white puffs of fabric at her shoulders and her elbows, and she seems to not have the horse she did earlier with her. I reach for her bow she had shot me with, and sling it over her shoulder, and pick her up.

I position the girl bridal style, with her legs on the side with arrow poking out of it, one leg on each side. I quietly call for Toothless, and soon I see him bounding along the newly cut path. He stops short and stares at the bundle of red and blue in my arms. "Not now, bud. She needs help." And with the word help, he immediately

walks over and lowers himself to the ground where I can lean into him and carry the girl to the house. I situate myself on the saddle, and with a nudge he takes off running through the fresh cut path, straight to the hut. I see the thicket wall, and with a bounding leap, Toothless clears the 20 foot wall and lands softly out front.

I sling my foot and slide down, girl in hands, and walk her inside. I lay her in my bed, and am grateful I bought that candle from that old man at market last week. It makes it smell less like an 18 year old and his dragon live under one roof. I remember Gobber once showing me what to do if someone was knocked out when Tuffnut got knocked out by his sister and she dragged him in. I grab a sack of wool and place it under her legs, keeping them above her head. It helps wake them up. Afterwards, I somewhat tidy up a little, clearing the shirts and old riding gear off the middle of the floor. I hit the arrow still lodged in my arm on a chair, and mutter a few curses before the pain goes away. I mean, I've had plenty of pain, and this is nothing to a Gronkle's burn. I tough it out, and the pain subsides in a few seconds. I look over the the mysterious girl, and tilt my head. Even dirty and unconscious, there is a fierceness to her, and I'm drawn to it.

### 3. Chapter 3

Grabbing a small swatch of fur and soaking it in water, I walk over to the girl and place it on her forehead. She twitches, and I know she's starting to wake up. I wipe the mud off her face, mostly on her nose and forehead considering she fell face first. I finish, and her face looks relatively clean. I start to clean the mud off the rag, and have time to get up and walk over to her before I hear an attempt at a mutter, and her eyes, clear, blue, and piercing, snap open all of a sudden. She goes to sit up, but I put my good hand in front of her forehead so she can't move.

"Hey sleepy pants. You ok? You fell on your face."

"I did?" the girl says with a thick Scottish accent. Everybody here talks with one, and they look at me funny when I don't.

"Yeah, you fainted after you pinned me to a tree with this thing." And I gesture to my arrow-clad forearm. "But it's just a flesh wound. Not that bad."

The girl slowly sits up, eyeing my arm the whole time. I decide to break the silence. "And who would I have the pleasure of making this acquaintance of?"

"Uhâ€¦ I shot you with my arrow, and you're sayin' ye wan'ta be friends?" the girl has the most confused look on her face.

"Absolutley. So. Who would you be?" I ask nonchalantly.

"Merida." She says to the ground.

"I've heard that name somewhere." I say. I rack my mind for it, but come up empty. Although I've definitely heard it. May be royalty or rich. I had never met the royal family before. I typically avoided

the meetings.

But the girl just replies with a heavy sigh. So I just change the subject.

"Well, Merida, it is a pleasure meeting you. I am Hiccup. Yes, take your time to laugh now." I say with an over flourished bow.

"Hiccup?" Merida asks with what I can't distinguish between concern and amusement.

"Yes. I am aware of the hilarity of the name. And that there is an arrow sticking through my arm. Would you like to help me?" and with this, Merida nods her head.

"Yeah, sorry about that laddie. Thought ye were Mor'du."

"What's a mor'du?"

"Oh, a huge bear, magic bear, who came up 'n stole me daddy's leg right from beneath him. He got a peg now, and he gets fine with it. Legend says that Mor'du has impenetrable hide that'll snatch any weapon ye got, and take part 'o ye for a souvenir." She says with her heavy accent. She sighs and looks around my room. "Small room ye got here, eh?"

"Yeah, I built it all myself. Came here four years ago, when I was almost forced into something that would have killed me."

"Oi, laddie. What would that impossible task be?" Merida asks as she cocks her round head, laden with fiery curls.

"Killing a dragon." I say to her as I continue to tidy up the cabin.

"A dragon! Ha! Those big lizards don't exist, don't be a buffoon, Hiccup!" she says, blowing me off.

"Oh, well, Miss Merida. I wouldn't be too sure of that." I say, staring at the door. Just waiting for Toothless to stick his head through some hole in the house and for her to freak out. I better mover her bow. I walk over to her and get her stuff onto the table, off her neck. "All better, Merida. Now. Can you do me a huge favor?" and with this, Merida nods her head, curls bobbing. She's adorable. \_Wait, what? I don't like her. she shot me. SHOT me. \_

"Hiccup? Ye in there, laddie?" a small hand is being waved in front of my face, and I snap out of my rant there.

"Oh, what, yeah? Favor, we were talking about favors. Ok, so I need you to hold this." And with that I motion to the arrowhead. I run my fingers along the shaft, and determine that if I push the arrow a little further, nothing will happen. "Watch your fingers." And with this I push the arrow another inch out, and Merida starts freaking out.

"Hiccup! Didn't that hurt! Are you insensitive to pain!?" I just chuckle at the fiery red head's response to the small movement.

"Hey, Mer, calm down. I need that saw over there. And grab the black pebble looking thing." She silently nods and retrieves them for me. I immediately hand her the saw and hold out the arrow. I point to a spot on the arrow's shaft about two inches from the entry point. "Now, saw it off there."

"Hiccup! Again, with you being crazy!"

"You got a better plan?" I shoot back at her. She just gives me death eyes, and starts sawing. As the saw starts cutting through the arrow, she winces with every motion. As the feathered end drops to the ground, I point to the black dragon scale. She silently hands them to me, and I smooth down the cut edge.

"Aye, Hiccup. What is that stone? I've never seen one like it." Merida says, looking at the small, black scale.

"I'd tell you, but you wouldn't believe me." I smile, knowing full well she won't.

"Try me. I'm not dumb." Merida says, dramatically putting her hands on her tilted hips and arching an eyebrow.

I stop filing the wood, and hold the scale in front of her face. "Dragon scale." I say simply and go back to what I was working on.

"Aye. Ye were right. I don't believe it." and with that, she plops herself on my bed, and sighs, looking at my arm. "I really am sorry, Hiccup. I didn't mean to shoot you."

This girl is making herself too guilt ridden. I swear, she cares too much. "It's fine, really. I got quite the beatings and burns back home, so I have gotten accustomed to pain. And, you can grab a few things if you're hungry. I have apples over there." And I point to the bowl on the table across the room. She gets up and starts looking around the house.

I run my fingers across the stump I had just finished filing down, and content with the smoothness of it, I call Merida over. "What ye gonna do, Hiccup?"

I just thrust my arm out to her. "Grab the arrow, and pull slowly." She just stares at me like I grew a third eye. "What?"

Her red curls jump all around as she shakes her head in disappointment. "Ye gonna get yourself killed Hiccup." She mutters to herself, and starts pulling on the arrow. I can feel it creeping out from beneath my skin, and all of a sudden, it pops out, leaving a small hole going in and out of my arm. I twist it all around, making sure nothing is too badly injured.

A little dribble of blood comes out, and Merida starts freaking out, blue eyes darting to mine and back to my arm. "That's it, Hiccup. I'm taking ye to get fixed up."

"Mer, that's not necessary. I'm fine." I retaliate, but I can tell I'm going either way.



"No, ye not. I'm going to get Angus, my horse, and ye are gonna stay here." The girl is stubborn. But I'm not riding a horse. I have much better, more fun options.

"Fine, I'll go. But I'm not riding a horse."

"Ye sayin' ye wanna walk?"

"Oh, no. that's too much work for an \_injured man.\_" I dramatically push out my arm to her. "I've got my own form of transportation."

"I don't understand." Her face twists in confusion. I just chuckle and pull her outside. I don't see Toothless immediately, and do the quiet whistle. Merida grabs me and twists me to face her in the doorway. "Hiccup, what are you calling? A bird? Your horse?" Again, I chuckle and wait. In a second, I hear a warble from on top of the house. Toothless is hunched on the roof, darkness illuminated by the bright blue sky.

I back up out of the house and sigh, he always feels the need to be up there for some reason. "Toothless, get down. Our guest is wanting to go somewhere. Do you wanna go?" but before I can say 'flying', he jumps down from the roof on top of me, liking me. He's exactly like a cat-dog I swear. But Merida screams at the sight of him, eyes wide, and stumbles back into the house.

"WHAT IS THAT!" She yells, eyes round in fear. I see her reach for her bow and arrows, but I hold up a hand, showing her I have them. Her clear blue eyes continue staring at Toothless, and realization wipes across her face. "Is that a dragon?"

#### 4. Chapter 4

Toothless stops licking me, and pops his head up, and turns and sits quickly beside me. I get up, attempting to wipe off my face, and plop a hand on Toothless' head. "Merida, meet Toothless. Toothless, Merida. He is really just a big old moron." And with that, Toothless flips his head a little, smacking me with part of his head. Merida giggles as I tackle him, and I'm reminded of her presence. I'm latched to Toothless' neck, hanging like a sloth, and tilt my head back, and smile. "Wanna go for a ride?" and the fear in her bright blue eyes dissolves into pure excitement.

"A ride? On the dragon?" She jumps a little, like a child almost. I laugh and drop to the ground on my back, and pull myself up.

"I mean, I have the saddle and tail already on. And you are the one insistent on getting medical advice on my new piercing." So I walk over to her, and grab her wrist, putting her hand out in front of her, slowly scooting her forward to Toothless. "Dragons are all about trust. If they can trust you, you'll be their best friend. Where I used to live, we got dragon raids all the time. I was trying to make a name for myself, besides the scrawny pathetic blub. I was trying out a new device for shooting down a dragon, and I saw a darkness in the sky and shot. I heard Toothless go down, and when I found him, I cut him free and noticed his tail got messed up. So I tried to gain his trust and learned their ways, and managed to get a saddle and tail on him. And we've been inseparable ever since." As I finish talking, I position her hand a few inches from Toothless' nose. She

looks at him in the eyes, and he slowly closes his, and bumps his face into her hand.

She lights up, getting all giddy. "Did ye see that Hiccup! I touched a dragon! A real life dragon!" she stopped and looked at her hands, then me. "Does that mean he trusts me? Enough for me to ride on him?" I just laugh at her childish ways, and nod. She laughs and jumps around in circles, and soon Toothless starts wagging his tail. He starts bouncing around with her, both enjoying their new found trust. I just sit on a stump, and pull out a sketchbook and charcoal and start drawing the two new friends.

"Whatcha doing Hic"

"NOTHING." I slam my book shut and look over at the girl. She looks an absolute mess. There is grass all in her hair, and dirt on her dress.

"Ye drawing me and Toothless, weren't ye?" she says with that accusatory look she gave me earlier. I can feel my cheeks going bright red, and fumble around before getting up.

"No, um, of course not, I wouldn't, uh," Wow, real smooth. "Dragon! Lets go ride the dragon. Cause my arm has a hole in it, um, let's go!" and I awkwardly walk to Toothless, followed by a laughing Merida. I hop up onto his back, and Merida slowly approaches him. I reach out a hand, and pull her up behind me.

I hear her laughing from excitement, curls bobbing. "Let's go fly! Can he go fast? Can we go fast? Let's go let's go LET'S GO!" a very excited Scot yells from behind me.

"Calm down Mer." I say. Turning to Toothless, I silently ask for permission, and he nods. I help up Merida, and I hop on in front of her. I lean down to Toothless and pat his head. "Gently, Toothless." I hear Merida make a 'hmpf' and reach down to pet his side.

"Give it all you got, Toothless."

"Nonononono wait!" I attempt to stop him, but Merida had already kicked his sides like a horse, and he was shooting straight out to sea, Merida screaming wildly behind me, having what sounds like the time of her life. After a few minutes, Toothless had slowed down, and Merida has too. She slips her arms around my waist, and rested her head between my shoulder blades.

"Thank you, for showing me this." Merida says with a contented sigh. We slowly coast through the clouds back towards the castle. We get pretty close to the shore, when she starts noticing my suit. "What's this do?" I feel her tugging at the strap that loosens my back fin, and I twist to grab her hand so it won't hit her in the face. An odd shot of electricity shoots through my hand, and I awkwardly hold it for a second before realizing what I'm doing and let it go.

"Uh, haha, that, uh, wait, I can actually show you. You wanna see?" I say, not really knowing how to explain that I use the flap for solo flying. The bright girl nods quickly, and I smile and start pulling levers to prep Toothless for his solo flying. I do a quick final glance, and being satisfied with what I see, pull my feet out of the stirrups and sit up on the saddle. I turn around and face her, "Hold

on. You ready?"

"I think so? What for, exactly, am I getting ready for?" she asks, and I just crack a grin.

"This." and with that, I just roll off Toothless, and Merida screams.

"Hiccup, what on earth are you doing! Hiccup are you ok?" I hear the first bit, but her words are whipped away by the wind. I hear another scream, and I look up to see toothless in a nosedive. We even out, face to face, in a free fall. I can see Merida on his back, wild red hair flying around as fast as her words are. I twirl over to her, and wave. She is still frantically asking about my state of being, and I give her a thumbs up, and reach to pull the flap, and my 'wings' appear, and I slow down to a gentle glide down.

Toothless also evens out, and it's only seconds before I'm flying next to Merida. She's freaking out, but looks over at me, and her jaw drops open. I just chuckle, but my body wobbles, so I reach and snap the cord that pops out the back fin. We slowly glide our way to the shore, which is growing ever bigger and more detailed.

I managed to land myself safely, but not gracefully, on a small beach near the cabin. Toothless landed a few feet away, and Merida jumped off of him and slammed into me in a hug.

"Wha, what?" I say, slowly losing air from the bone crushing, arm ripping, bear hug.

"You scared me, jumping off. Tell me next time, ok? I got scared you would die." She says into my chest.

"Well, I would return the hug, but I can't move my arm, one of which still has a hole in it, remember?" I personally don't mind it, it just is a small rubbing and an ache, but she was really concerned, so I wanted to get it checked so she could sleep at night.

"Oh, yeah." She says absentmindedly. I feel her face crunch, probably from realization, and she immediately lets me go and looks at my arm, then me. "Did I hurt it? I'm sorry, I forgot, all caught up in you dying and stuff, I mean I already shot you, it'd suck if you died. Bad day." She awkwardly shoves a mass of curls behind her ear.

"Hey, it's fine. Just a dull ache. Where is this medic you kept talking about?" I ask, curious at where we're going. The sun was starting to make its way to the horizon while we were up in the clouds, so it was sitting on top of the ocean now.

"Oh, we should be near it. I go here a lot, and there's a trail somewhereâ€¦" she trails off as she looks around. I turn to Toothless, attach my flying gear to the saddle and tell him to go home, and he starts through the forest, and I soon hear the warble signifying his arrival. It isn't too long before I hear a triumphant laugh from Merida, and she turns to me. "Found it! C'mon, Hic!"

She walks along the path, and I jog to catch up to her. "What's with the whole 'Hic' thing? New nickname?" I say, not really there, but off in space, wondering about everything.

"I guess. I could say the same for you? Is 'Mer' my new nickname?"

"Absolutely." I come back to earth, and turn from the trees to her and find her watching me. She shoots her bright blue eyes to the trees behind me, and I just chuckle and arch a quick eyebrow, and she turns the color of her hair. "What'cha doing, Mer? Basking in all my absolute dragon riding, lifesaving handsomness?"

"Lifesaving?" she says with a smug look.

"Oh, come on. You would have gotten eaten by a wolf or a bear or something if I left you unconscious on the ground. I saved your life"

"Yeah, you think that." She looks to the ground, and since I have an excuse to, I look at her. I mean really look. From the right angle, her hair looks like a burning fire, framing her face. Her clear, very pretty, blue eyes are focused on the ground, large and full of wonder. She has a lopsided smile, and I'd guess she was almost 18. I could tell, from experience, she used to have a rounder face, but it slimmed out recently. She wore her bow over her shoulder, creasing into her hair and dark green-teal dress. She looks graceful and pretty, I never noticed it until today. She shoots her eyes over with that smug look. I feel a little bit of heat in my cheeks, and mess with my pockets.

"What'cha doing, Hic? Basking in my amazing arching skills and my beauty?" she playfully shoots back at me for my last comment.

"Yep." Her face gets all funny, clearly not expecting for me to agree. "Also, you never said no to my question." I chuckle as she stops abruptly and I just keep walking past her. Around a bend, the trail ends, and it opens into the castle field. I stop and wait for Merida to catch up. She just keeps walking and I follow her towards the castle.

## 5. Chapter 5

She walks into the stone building, into which I presume is the kitchen due to the amount of clanking pans I hear. She sees my hesitation, and sighs. "Hic, come on.

"Uh, Merida, this is the castle. Are you sure we can go into it?" I say, still awkward.

"Duh. Come \_on.\_" And with that, we walk in, she struts through like she owns the place and I'm trying to shrink to the size of a dot. After we enter the hall, I run up to Merida.

"Oh, Merida?" she turns with a quizzical look.

"Yeah?"

"Don't mention Toothless to anyone, preferably dragons at all. Today only happened between you," I emphasize my point by poking her nose. "And me." I poke my own nose.

She turns a rosy pink, and looks at the floor. "Ok. Just us two." She

shoots her eyes up to me. "And don't go around saying 'Merida shot me and pinned me to a tree. Bad representation of the family."

I just chuckle. I guess that wouldn't be good for a family name. "Okay, Merida." We turn a few corners, and enter a huge room, stairs on one side, hunting prizes littering the wall. I apparently slowed down to admire the place, because Merida scoffs and grabs my good wrist and pulls me on. Up the stairs, and to the left, we enter a room the size of my house. A small, plump lady sits in a rocking chair, humming to herself when Merida busts in.

"Maudie, can you patch up my friend's arm?" the lady walks over to me and grabs my arm. She looks up at me, obviously pondering at what on earth happened. Merida must have noticed it too. "Ok, I may have shot him" Maudie turns bleach white and sits down, fanning her face. After a few minutes, normal color returns, and she starts working on my arm. I'm getting pretty bored with some strange lady poking in my arm.

"So Merida. Tell me, is it a common thing for you to just stroll into the royal palace?" I turn to Merida, who is intently watching the nurse.

"Uh, yeah, why?"

"Cause it's the palace. Where the royals live." All of a sudden, I hear quick footsteps out the door, and it opens. I don't really pay mind to it, I'm watching the final adjustments being made on my arm.

"Merida! Oh, you're ok! The boys said they saw you in here." I turn my head over to the door, and find nobody there. I go to ask Merida who that was, but I find Merida being crushed in a hug by the queen? It's about this time she notices my presence. The queen turns to Merida, arm slung around her shoulder and amusement on her face. "And who would this young man be?" Before I can get a word in, Merida answers her causally.

"This," she gestures to me. "Is Hiccup. He lives in the woods." Merida notices Queen Elinor gazing at my arm. "He had an encounter in the woods that resulted in a hole in his arm, and although he insisted he was fine, I wanted to oversee it being treated." I feel awkward around the both of them, and wanted to break some of the tension.

"Good evening, Your Majesty." I bow as well as I can while Maudie is still finishing my arm.

"A pleasure to meet you, Hiccup. Is your arm alright?" I move my fingers around to show her, and nod in the affirmative. "And what would be the encounter you had in the woods that resulted in the piercing of your arm?" I see all the color drain from Merida's face as she wildly gestures for me to be quiet behind the Queen.

"I, uh, tripped on an arrow and it got me." I see Merida heave a large sigh and plop down on the chair, smiling at me.

"Merida shot you didn't she?" the queen says flatly, like it's a common thing. Merida shot up from the chair, eyes wide.

"It was an accident! He looked black and I thought he was Mor'du!" the queen just pinches the bridge of her nose, shaking her head slightly.

"Merida, nobody goes around shooting people. Especially, a \_princess.\_" Wait, \_what? \_A \_princess?\_ I've been treating her like normal town-folk!

"Wait, Merida, you're a \_princess\_? Oh my gods, why didn't you say! I'm sorry your highness, I didn't know, I should have figured it out, I'm" I ramble for a minute, oblivious to my surroundings, feeling entirely embarrassed.

"Hiccup." Merida tries to stop the rambles. "Hiccup!" she smacks my arm, getting a distasteful look from her mom.

"Huh?"

"It's fine. I prefer not to be treated all fancy. It's all good. Right mum?"

The queen has a more royal aura than Merida, who is more spirited and reckless. "Absolutely. It was at no one's fault." Maudie, at this point, drops my hand with a satisfied 'hmpf' and I stretch and twist my arms, seeing if she inhibited my movement at all. "Well, it was a pleasure meeting you, Hiccup, correct?" I smile and nod. "I will let you two get back to whatever you were doing before Merida dragged you here." I smile and bow slightly, and Elinor heads out into the hallway, Maudie following her.

I turn to Merida to say something, but before I can get words out she punches me in the arm.

"What was that for?" I exclaim, rubbing my now sore bicep.

"Don't call me Your Highness, or else I'll pin something much more precious to you to the tree." My eyes widen and I gulp, knowing she would.

"Sorry." Is all I am able to squeak out. Merida's face loosens, and she's back to her normal self, her anti-princess attitude.

She helps me up out of the chair, and we stroll down the halls, but Merida stops in front of one room.

"I just have to grab some riding stuff, Hiccup. I'll be right out." Merida pushes open the door and walks in. I find it unfit to just walk into a lady's room, nonetheless a princess' room, uninvited, so I rest up against the wall outside of the door, while I can hear Merida hunting down boots and something else.

"And who are you, Laddie?" I turn my head to see King Fergus, whom I have seen a few times out hunting in the woods. I hop off the wall and bow awkwardly.

"My name is Hiccup, your Majesty. I am a friend of the princess, she's in her room grabbing something and I decided to wait outside."

"That's nice. And you can call me Fergus. Any friend of Merida is a

friend of mine." He notices my wrapped arm and nods to it. "What happened to ye arm, there?"

I chuckle a little, and twist it. "Oh, you know, the usual. Your daughter decided to pin my arm to a tree with a well shot arrow. It didn't do much damage, just pierced the skin and a little underneath it." I wiggle my fingers and smile at the king. He just laughed and nodded.

"That sounds like something she would do, laddie. He studies my face for a second, and looks confused. "I don't think I've seen you around here before. Where do you live?"

"Oh, I live in the woods. In a little field I found while walking around. Just me and and my friend Toothless."

"What happened to your parents, if you don't mind me asking."

"It's fine," I sigh. I hadn't really thought about dad in a while. "Well, my mother passed when I was a baby, and my dad sailed off in the middle of the night when I was 14. That's when I moved into the woods." I look down, a sad twinge in my gut. I almost missed Berk in that moment. Then I remembered what I was treated like, and was asked to do, and that twinge disappeared really quickly.

"I'm sorry to hear that. You are welcome at the castle any time, Hiccup."

At that moment from across the big front hall, a woman screams, a pan clatters to the floor, and the three little red heads from the market pop out a door with pastries in hand. One recognizes me, and waves, and I just smile back at them. So I guess they are princes? As they dart by, Fergus turns and heaves an amused sigh.

"I better catch them. Nice meeting you Hiccup." I hear giggles and screams and Fergus throwing playful threats at the boys from down the hall. It's right about then Merida opens the door, and steps out, in a shorter green dress, brown tights underneath, and her hair in a braid, bow in hand. Another pan clatters, and we both flinch.

"The boys?" she asks, and I just laugh and nod.

"Wanna go walk in the forest?" and with that, we take the same path the beach, and sit there, talking until dusk, learning about each other and enjoying each other's presence. After watching the sun go down, we walk to the castle, and say our goodbyes and goodnights.

I slowly make my way to the cabin, and crawl through the wall of thickets and find Toothless outside the house. I greet him, happier than usual. I get a judging look from the night fury, and I shove his face down and just laugh at him. I strip to my underwear and flop down in bed, burying my face in my pillow. I take a deep breath, and instantly feel calmer. My entire bed smells like her, a sweet earthy smell mixed with apples, bright and crisp. I drift off, with a smile on my lips.

I'm riding Toothless. In the dark of night, we're almost invisible. I fly above the Scottish forests, and the castle. I smile, knowing Merida is in there. I lie back on him, sighing and closing my eyes. In the distance, I hear Merida's voice. It's too close to be from the

castle though. Like she's above me, in the stars. All of a sudden, Toothless is violently shaking, and I'm flopping on his back like a fish. Suddenly it feels like a bucket of water was dumped on my face. Toothless stops shaking and Merida's voice is there again, louder and closer.

My eyes snap open, and I realize I was dreaming. Merida stands in front of me in the dark. I rub my eyes, only to find I'm covered in Toothless slobber.

"Goodness, you're a heavy sleeper. I said your name six times, and toothless licked you twice."

I shake some spit off my hand. "I can tell. Why are you here? It's," I look out the window. Still dark. "Not even light outside." I mumble, trying to wipe the sleep out of my eyes. But Merida's wide awake.

"Hey Hic, you wanna go back into the forest? I can ride Angus, you have Toothless."

I do feel much more awake at the thought of spending the day with Merida. Sitting up, I stretch. "I would love to do that, Merida." I go to throw the thin blanket off of me, but realize I only have on underwear. "But I would also love to be wearing more than underwear when we do so." And I think I see Merida turn as red as her hair before walking out with Toothless behind her. I just stand up when I hear a low gurgle from Toothless.

"What are you looking at toothless?" I chuckle and finish putting everything on and rinsing my face off.

As I hop on, Merida nudges Angus, and they shoot off into the forest. I follow the thud of hooves, obviously close behind.

But a wrong turn on my part leaves me lost in the woods, and the sun beginning to show above the horizon. I kick Toothless up into the air, and look around. Half a mile away lays a great stone wall, with a waterfall flowing over it, illuminated in red. A large stone juts up next to the wall, and atop that stands a figure.

I guide Toothless over kick a switch that lets Toothless do solo flying, and quietly hop off not to disturb her, and Toothless lands at the bottom, investigating Angus. On the edge of the outcrop, I plop myself down sitting in, what I once heard it described as, crisscross applesauce.

I watch Merida, back to the now sunrise, wild curls released from their braid, green dress flowing against her legs, bow over her shoulder, eyes closed in content.

It was right then and there, I fell in love.

~~~~~R&R~~~~~

## 6. Chapter 6

I must have been staring at her with a crooked smile, absorbed in her



beauty, for a while, because when I got my head out of the clouds, the sky was almost fully blue, and Merida was turning around. She spun and saw me and jumped, obviously startled by my presence. I just chuckled. "Boo!" I teased, and she walked over and rustled my hair and sat down next to me, facing the other way, legs dangling off of the rock.

"Very funny, Hiccup." Merida said with a light shove. I twisted around, facing the way she was.

"I know. I'm hilarious." She just chuckles, and looks at me, with a look I can't quite place. It's somewhere between knowing and smug. I try and swallow away the twist in my gut, and change the conversation.

We sit there for a while, talking about anything and everything. About an hour later, Merida takes me to a strange ring of stones, and she calls them the Callanish Stones. We spend the day together, and around mid-afternoon, we return to the big stone, sitting on the edge.

We spend more time talking, and we got down to fears.

"I'm afraid to get married." She says, looking at the sky.

"Married?" Well, it's an odd fear but it makes sense.

"Yeah, married. Since I'm the princess, I apparently have to get married to someone of power. Mom wants me to choose from the three clans. But she's highly considering some islands in the middle of the ocean. She tried to get me married on my 16th birthday. 16!"

"That's crazy. It's too young."

"I managed to convince her to postpone it, though. But until when, though, I have no idea. Now that I'm almost 18, my birthday's in a month and a half." That's about late October, early November. She buries her head in her hands. "I guess I'm afraid to marry someone I don't love." She just flops on her back and stares at the sky. All of a sudden, she props herself on one elbow and looks at me, clear blue eyes. "What are you afraid of, dragon boy?"

"Dragon boy? Is that a new thing?" I just look at her, but she has that look from earlier. It seems she's figured out my weakness.

"I know you're avoiding the question, Hiccup." The look ensues. And I crack.

"Fine. I'm afraid of rejection." I sigh and look at the castle in the distance.

"Rejection. That's a new one." She says, flopping back.

"Yeah, it's weird, I know. But back home—" No. Berk is not my home. Here is. Scotland. My little cabin, with Toothless, swimming in the river and the waters, sitting with Merida on top of this big rock spilling every secret to each other. "Back on the island I came from, I was rejected by everybody. I was called the runt of the litter, literally the hiccup. Nobody really heard me, except the guy I worked

for, Gobber. I was once told my my dad and Gobber, that I needed to stop doing all of," I gesture to all of myself. "This."

"But Hiccup, you just gestured to all of you." She says lying flat on her back, head surrounded by an ocean of red curls, each an individual, just like the princess herself.

"That was the point of the saying. You know how the ocean islands have dragon problems, right?"

"I thought they were joking until I met you. But yes."

"So, the only way of getting noticed was to kill dragons. They called me toothpick. A toothpick \_for the dragons. \_I couldn't kill one, get noticed. I didn't have enough muscle to even lift any weapon but a small knife, dagger thing. So I kept making devices to try and bring them down. I finally made one that worked, it threw a bola, or a rope with rocks, at whatever I shot it at. Nonetheless, it worked." I gestured at Toothless beneath us, laying in the sun.

"But even when I found him, I couldn't kill him. I saw myself in him. Stuck and hopeless. So I cut him free. I used my tricks I learned with Toothless in the dragon killing arena where we were being trained. I never used any weapons. Just dragon nip and some eel and some well-placed scratches. But still, I was asked to kill, as in make it die, a dragon. So I ran away. came here on Toothless, and never looked back. I started a new life, on my own terms. I don't ever want to be useless again. If I am, it will be on my own terms." I look over at Merida, who is listening to me with intent.

"So we both want to get out of the lives we have or had? Me as a princess, you as a useless Hiccup to society?"

"Yep." I sat up, elbows on my knees. Merida did the same. I glance at her out of the corner of my eye, and there's the look again. That smug look. I want to say something, but the look was throwing me off, so I try and change the topic, all while trying to look at Merida without losing it.

"What is the name of this place? You're beautiful." I mindlessly say. OH \_SHIT.\_ I immediately roll over the ending of the word and retry at words. "It's beautiful. This place. What's it called?"

I try and distract Merida from my mishap, but she realizes what I said a split second later. She just gives me a confused yet amused look, and I turn bright red and look around pretending to observe my surroundings, but really I'm just avoiding her gaze.

"Excuse me?" she says after a second. I'll just play it dumb, say she heard it differently.

"This, um, place. Like, the waterfall, the big rock we're sitting on. It truly is a very pretty face. Place. This is a pretty place."

"Oh really? Is it now?" she says, only amused now, fully knowing what I said. But I'm still gonna play the stupid card.

"Yep, wonderful place. Surrounded by the green trees, white clouds and gorgeous blue eyes." I realize I did it again, but before I can yell sky and try and correct my third screw up, Merida catches

me.

"Ok, that's enough torturing you." Merida suddenly stops looking at me with that look and starts giggling. \_She was doing it on purpose! That clever, evil, smart, prettyâ€|\_

"Wow, that was rude." I say and stand up, walking to the middle of the rock and flop back down, taking in the sun on the cool rock, letting the mist from the waterfall gently land on my face. I can feel the leather of the riding gear start to swell from the water, and I unlatch it and take it off. I look down and smack my forehead. I forgot about a shirt. I must have been in such a rush this morning I literally forgot the shirt.

Whatever. I just toss it behind me, and I hear it flop down a few feet away. I just close my eyes and let the mist land on me, then disappear from the warmth of the sun's rays. I hear Merida slowly stand up, and crack open an eye. She turns around, and just looks at me funny. But what I don't miss, is the tinge of pink along her cheeks. \_I can use that against her later. \_

"Hiccup, where's your shirt?"

I would get too hot. That sounded like a reasonable excuse, instead of \_I was so caught up with spending the day with you again, I rushed out the door in only pants and my riding gear.\_

"I left it at home. I would have gotten too hot today, riding around."

"Hotter than you are now?" she pauses for a minute. She must have realized how it sounded. "I mean, are you feeling warm now, would you be more hot with it on?" I look back to her, and realize she is a light pink. I smirk and chuckle at the awkward princess, and she goes from light pink to a really dark pink, blushing. I roll over, laying on my stomach, letting the cool mist hit my back. I cross my legs over my back, and put my chin on my hands, knowing I have full control of where this goes.

"I don't know, Merida. \_Would \_I be hotter with my shirt on?"

The girl turns bright red, a stark difference between her green dress and her red skin, and stammers to try and put up a response. "N.. No. I wouldn't think." I decide to screw with her. If she can use the flirty look to screw with me, I can use shirtless me to screw with her.

"Cause, if you want, I can go grab the shirt. Or if you can't handle me without a shirt, I meanâ€|" I have a devilish smirk on, and she's still red.

"No!" she sounded really enthusiastic about that. I add to the smirk, a raised eyebrow, and she's just falling over her words. "I, uh, mean, you don't have too unless you want, it doesn't get much cooler than this at night, and, um, I, uh," Words are just falling out of her mouth, and I decide to stop. I giggle a little, and Merida is still stammering. The giggle turns into a small laugh, and soon enough I'm rolling over onto my back laughing so hard.

Merida stops stammering, and turns a different red. Fuming red. She

stands up straight and kicks my side a little, not enough to do damage, but to sting a little. But I'm still cracking up at the stammering princess. She just walks over to the waterfall and leans back into it, soaking her hair. One side hurts from the kick, the other from laughing. I manage to sit up, slowing my laughs. I look to the falls for Merida, but don't find her there. I turn around, to find feet and a slow drip by them.

I look up to find Merida, wet hair being cupped in a hand. I don't have time to realize what she's about to do until she drops her wet hair above my upturned face and I'm met by my own personal downpour. I sputter and stand up, head and shoulders soaking wet. Merida starts giggling, as well I do. We sit there for a few minutes, laughing at each other. Laughing at Merida's ability to make me screw up words and her red curls plastered to her face, and my wet hair and my newfound super power to screw over Merida. We sit there, happy with each other. I see the sun near the horizon, and I realize we've spent all day with each other.

All of a sudden, Merida's stomach makes a giant rumbling noise. "Hey Mer, don't you need to get home for dinner?"

"Nope. Today's a Sunday, so Mum knows I'll be out till after dark." I get up, and walk over to the ledge, and look down, and see Toothless and angus at the base of the waterfall, having a drink. I lie down in the middle of the stone. "Are they ok?" Merida asks, obviously knowing what I checked for.

"Yeah. They're getting along fine. Check for yourself, I think they like each other." And she gets up, and walks to the edge. I close my eyes, and lay out, arms wide. My eyes flash open, though, when a mass of damp curly hair lays down on my arm.

"What? I was chilly, and you are a heat radiating being."

"Uh huh, sure." She jabs my side, but I just smirk the the princess as she curls against me. She wiggles her head against my shoulder, like a puppy, and I can't hold back a chuckle.

"Shut up, dragon boy."

"That's dragon man to you."

## 7. Chapter 7

I open my eyes as the sun just finishes dipping below the horizon, to find a sleeping Merida in my arm, back against my stomach, holding my arm like it's a teddy bear. I smile into the mass of red curls, and gently pick her up. She shuffles, and grunts something, but stays asleep.

I hook my riding top around my foot, and I do a gentle whistle, and Toothless perks up, and jumps up, hovering enough to where I can hop on him with Merida in my arms. She mumbles and yawns, and opens her eyes.

She smiles up at me, and I return the favor. I help prop her up, and Toothless circles down to Angus. She gets up, wobbling a little, and makes her way to Angus. I throw on my riding top, too lazy to buckle

it.

We walk our horse and dragon all the way back to the castle, where I hop off of Toothless, and help Merida off of Angus. We walk to the stable, and feed Angus. As we say our goodbyes, Merida hugs me. I hug her back, confused but not questioning it.

"Hey, Hiccup. I had a great time today." She says into my shoulder.

"Me too, Mer."

"I have these stupid lessons tomorrow until Friday, but I get out of them around midday. I'll meet you at market tomorrow, after supper, around six?"

"Okay. I'll be there." She pulls out of the hug, and motions me to come closer. So I bend my face down a little. I have about four inches on her, so my little bend and her tiptoes make us the same height. She pulls my head closer, and leans to whisper in my ear. "And Hic, you're good either way." I have no idea what she's talking about. But I can't say anything before she hops up on her toes and places a quick kiss on my cheek and hops up the stairs and turns at the door and waves before stepping inside.

All I can do is just hold my cheek, all the way to the forest, hopping on toothless, all the way home, and all the way to sleep.

It's noon when I wake up, the early morning rise and long day was obviously not nice to my body clock. I realize I have to meet Merida at the market in six hours. I start rushing around trying to get ready. I run over the happenings of last night over and over in my mind. But I still don't understand what she said.

"You're good either way." What does that mean? It doesn't have to do with last night. I try and remember earlier in the day, any time I asked a question. And then it hits me like a brick. I asked her about wearing a shirt.

Something along the lines of weather I was hotter with or without a shirt. Oh. So that was her answer. \_Oh. She called me hot.\_

I just laugh and make my way out to the river, clean clothes in hand. Despite being a Viking at birth, I believe in clean clothes, unlike most of them. I strip down to my underwear and jump in. I scrub my body as Toothless catches fish hair. I call Toothless over, and grab onto an ear flap and pull myself out, and change into my new clothes for the day, and probably tomorrow. I grab the cloth I brought and dry myself, and slip into the outfit.

I look up at the sky, and determine it to be about 2. I just smile, thinking I'm that much closer to spending more time with Merida. So to ease the stress, I throw on my riding gear, and hop onto Toothless, and take off into the sky.

It's pretty cloudy, so I can dart in and out of the clouds, above the Highlands. I fly over to the places the clans were Merida was talking about. I see a field on one, and two men with long black hair working on sword fighting. I pass over that one, and recalled it as

Macintosh, the way Merida described the boy's hair.

I cross a strait of water, and there lies another field behind a large house, and there is a boy with a short man, with gray hair and a crazy look to his eyes, visible from way up here. The boy, presumably the son, is being taught at archery. Well, attempted to be taught. He looks out of it, day dreaming, not focusing on anything. Merida said the crazy ones were the Dingwall Clan.

The next island over, lied two large men, who I can only take as the Maguffin Clan, being the remaining clan and exactly matching the description. Big. The boy there, almost the size of his father, was practicing tossing cabers, with the large pole in hand.

I had heard of a few other tribes around here, but I realized I should be getting back, considering I have been flying in the open air for an hour and a half now. On the way back, I see the queen on a dock, handing a scroll to a sailor. I take a good look at the boat. I see shields on the side, and 2 big burly men on it. If I wasn't mistaken, it looks like a Viking ship. I make my way through the clouds to get a little closer for a better view of the boat. Toothless hops from the cloud we're above to the next one over, and what I see startles me. On the sail, is a very familiar dragon design, a monstrous nightmare with a sword in its throat. I saw that exact ship on Berk. Knowing if they even catch a glimpse of Toothless, he's dead, I fly straight up and head home through the clouds.

I make my way back to the hut shell shocked, and tend to the animals. I collect and go to clearing the sheep of their weight. I put the bushel of new wool into a basket, and check the sky. The sun is at about four-ish. So I leave the basket by the door, and go out with a knife and a pencil, having an idea.

First, I run to the tree where Merida shot me. I find a dent and a little blood in one of the trunks, and I know this is the one. I pull out my knife, and carve into the tree. Satisfied with the carving, I move back to the cabin, and carve into the wooden doorway. After, I found my way to the beach, getting lost along the way. I know I'm there when I see a pair of footsteps in the now dry mud. I make it to a familiar bend in the path, and carve into the nearest tree. After getting lost again, I finally found the hut. I walked inside, and put the knife down. I would get the castle one done later, but I hopped onto Toothless and made it to the jut of rock next to the falls. I hopped onto the rock and scribbled down onto the rock, and sat up satisfied.

At this point, I figure it was about time to make my way to the market, so I fly to the hut and toss Toothless a fish, grab a few coins, and head out. I see the triplets there almost immediately, and they run over and start to grab my arm and pull me to the sweets stand. I am not one to say no to a little extra spending money, but now that I have ties to the royal family, I don't want to risk it.

"Hey, not right now, ok? I have plans on meeting your sister in a few, so I don't want to do any looting today, got it?" I say in the sweetest way possible, and they just shrug and make their way over themselves. I just laugh and make my way to the apple stand, getting about 6. I hold them in a basket, and I go to the bread stand, and

find Merida waiting near it. She was leaning against a tent pole, in a light red dress, riding boots, and her hair flowing free.

## 8. Chapter 8

"Never thought you'd be the one to go shopping, dragon boy." And with that, Merida reaches in my basket, and takes a big bite out of an apple.

"Hey, that was mine!" I say, not really caring if she gave it back or not.

"I can buy you a million apples, Hiccup, I'll get you some from the kitchen." And with this, we start back to the cabin, joking and teasing our way there. I crawl through the hole and I toss the apples on the table, meeting her next to it.

"So, what do you want to do today, Mer?" I look up for the time. The sun puts it at half past six.

"Do you wanna go to the beach? I personally hate this dress, so I don't care if I get it dirty."

"Yeah, that sounds like fun." And we find our little exclusive beach, and walk to the water's edge and sit down. Merida leans her head on my shoulder, and I wrap my arm around her waist, both of us sighing in content. The silence we sit in is comfortable, but I'd like for some conversation.

"So Merida, how was your day?" I say, looking out at the endless ocean.

"Boring. It was full of stupid lessons and dumb rules. How was yours?"

"Well, due to your early morning surprise yesterday and full day of adventuring, I slept like a dead man until noon, and I went to the river. Let's see, I rode toothless around, and saw the three clans. The sons looked exactly like you described. Young Macintosh's hair is almost as luscious as yours." And I take a curl, and mindlessly start twisting it about my fingers.

"What were they all doing outside?"

"Looked as if training. Macintosh was doing swordplay, Maguffin was tossing cabers, and Dingwall, well, Dingwall was trying archery. I also saw a boat from Berk, and your mother handing a scroll over." I see her face scrunch up. "They're probably talking trade, right?"

"Yeah, I hope." We sit for a few more minutes before Merida faces me, and smiles. "Wanna go swimming?" The sun was getting warm on my back, and I'm up for a stuttering Merida anytime.

"Absolutely." Merida just giggles and starts hopping in, taking off only her shoes before wading out waist level. I just laugh at the overly excited princess and peel off my shirt and follow her out. She twirls around, and I can see out of the corner of my eye, her eyes widen a little and her gaze trails down to my abdomen, then

immediately she looks behind me, not wanting to do that again.

"I saw that, Mer." The girl is flushed over with a wave of pink, and looks guilty.

"Saw what?" oh so she's playing dumb?

"You looking."

"Looking at what?" playing really dumb.

"My glorious muscles."

She knows she was caught, but I can tell she didn't want to embarrass herself. "I have no idea what you are talking about, Hiccup."

"Ha! Using fancy words and perfect grammar. Typical lying thing."

"Whaâ€¦ that makes no sense." She gets in her regal position and turns her back to me.

"Oh really?" she just makes a 'hmpf' and stays facing away from me. I get an idea, and duck under the water, and quietly swim to where she stands. I peek open my eyes just a little, not enough for water to come in, but enough to see out, and I see two vaguely leg shaped things in front of me. I snap my arms out, grab her legs, and yank as hard as possible. I hear a splash, and Merida falls on top of me, and I slip out from beneath her and rise to the surface, cracking up and coughing at the same time.

Merida comes up, sputtering for air. "YE BIG NUMPTY! I'LL GET YE FER THAT!" Apparently, when Merida is angry, her Scottish accent becomes really obvious. I just dive under the water, and try and swim away as far, fast, and as quietly as possible without Merida finding me. I obviously aren't good at it because Merida tackles me seconds later. We jump around, teasing, pouncing on and tackling each other all the way to shore, where I'm crawling out of the water, and Merida jumps on my back, determined to win the tackle fight.

I roll over to fight her off, but she manages to pin my arms above my head, and she sits down on my gut, keeping me down. Still holding my arms down, with a leg on either side of my stomach, we have a stare to the death. I see she has a gleam in her eyes that is full of playful and fighting energy, and she could go on play fighting for a while, but I'm beaten tired.

I break the glare-off, and my eyes softening, and hers do a second after. We stay like that for a second, staring into each other's eyes, before we both realize what we're doing. I lay my head back in the sand, and we both coughs awkwardly as she hops off. I just chuckle, and look to her, now laying near me.

"You win."

"Yep." The sun is going down, and I sit up.

"Hey, it's gonna get dark soon, we should head back.

"Yeah, I guess." Merida stands up, wiping the sand off her dress. I



smile, and we walk along the beaten beach path to the castle. As we made it to the edge, I stop her. She turns to me, and before I can think twice, I lean over and kiss her cheek.

"My turn today." I say, and she just laughs and squeezes my hand, which I didn't even realize she was holding. She starts to the castle, and I release her hand, and watch her go inside. Once again, I'm smiling all the way home, and fall asleep with a giant smile on my face.

We spend the next week like this, me riding Toothless in the day, and meeting up Merida after dinner. We play, and sometimes fly around on Toothless. Every night ends the same, walking a path to the castle, and kissing one another on the cheek at sunset.

Friday, I wait at the circle of stones, where Merida said she'd meet me. I check the time. It's now 6:30, and I haven't seen Merida. I'm starting to get worried, when all of a sudden, I feel the ground shaking in a steady rhythm I've come to know as Angus approaching. She bursts out of the forest into the clearing, and I run up to her, checking if she's ok. Then, I notice her tears, and how much of a wreck she is right now. I close the distance, and help her off her horse. She just falls into my shoulder, still sobbing.

"Merida, Merida what's wrong." She just shakes her head, burying her face even further into my neck, and I just sit down with her in my lap, holding her as she cries herself dry.

After about twenty minutes, I think she's run herself dry. She pulls her face out of my neck slowly, and I see red-rimmed eyes, and her cheeks are glistening with tears. Through a rough breath, Merida tries to make sense of some words.

"Hiccupâ€¦ I've beenâ€¦ betrothed." She says, in between little sobs.

"Betrothed!" I exclaim. I understand now why she's crying so much. Just last week, she said this was her greatest fear. Being pushed into marriage, into love. Now it's happening to her.

"Hiccup, you gotta do something." she says, still sniffing. "I can't do it." she then whispers something to the ground.

"Merida, I can't help if I can't hear you." I say as softly as I can.

"Cause I love you! I can't be married to someone I don't love, especially while I'm in love! Hiccup, I love you." She says, bursting into another fit of sobs.

"I know, Merida. I love you too." I can't help but smile, and she looks up. I reach around her and hug her, feeling she isn't in the mood for a kiss. She just buries her head in my neck again, and starts crying again.

After another few minutes, I start asking some questions.

"When?"

"Two weeks." Not long enough.

"Who's coming?"

"The clans, and an island in the ocean. I forgot which one."

"Is it Berk?" I get a teary nod in my neck. I know exactly what moron was next in line after me. Snotlout. That self centered, stupid, vain, moron, has a 1 in 4 chance of getting my Merida. Not if I have anything to do with it.

"Hey Merida. You know how the ocean islands have dragons, right?" I get a nod. "You know how they fight them, right?" another nod. "What if, they had to do what I did with Toothless? Train them?" Merida sits up, wiping her face.

"That may work." I can see her mind working it out.

"Berk has an instinct to kill dragons, like the other islands. And the clans have never seen them."

"It's perfect, Hiccup. But where would we get the dragons?"

"Ask Berk to bring them. I saw they had plenty locked up."

"Ok. I'll have that be the thing the boys have to do to 'win my heart'." I kiss her cheek, and help her up. I see Angus grazing outside the circle, and we walk over to him. I help her up, onto angus.

"Remember what you're saying?"

"That I've come to terms with it, and that they must train a dragon to win me." I nod and walk with her to the edge of the clearing. She turns around, and looks at me sadly. "I love you, Hiccup. I always will."

"I love you too, Merida." And with this, she rides off to deliver the news.

## 9. Chapter 9

Hours later, in the middle of the night, Merida shows up at the cabin. It wasn't like I was asleep anyway with the thought of Merida being married off.

"Hiccup! They agreed! They'll let Berk bring the dragons!" she yells as she busts in my house.

I sit up in the dark, mumbling. "That's great, Merida. Now, when they get here, they'll have four dragons. Probably one of each of the most popular varieties. A Deadly Nadder, a Gronkle, a Zippleback, and a Monstrous Nightmare. They deal a lot with those, and that gives them an unfair advantage. So give Berk Toothless."

"Hiccup, won't he be hurt?"

"No, not if you do it right. Berk is going to want to kill him right away. The only way to train a dragon is not to have any weapons on

you, or else they'll be hostile. Make sure there are no weapons when everybody is together. Say it will have the clan disqualified. Make sure nobody hurts the dragons, either. That won't do any good, just hurt the dragon and the boy." I say, trying to ensure what would be a friendly environment for the dragons.

"Ok, what else. So, everybody gets a dragon, who should get which one?" I get up, still in my clothes from the day, and walk over to the table where I have a candle lit, and gather some papers and charcoal. We both sit down, and I sketch a Nadder from memory. The two legs, long wings, and head spines.

"This is a Deadly Nadder. Nadders are quick and light on their feet. They have tail spines they can shoot, and they breathe extremely hot flames." I quickly sketch a lumpy dragon, who reminds me of a roly poly. "This is a Gronkle. They eat rocks, and have lava like fire. They are really bad at air maneuvering, though, due to the tiny wings." And I draw the monstrous nightmare, as best I could. I only saw them rarely, when they attacked. I remember their big wings and twisty spines all along their back. "And this is a Monstrous Nightmare. It has a nasty habit of setting itself on fire. Very dangerous, only the best go for those."

"What about a Zippleback?" she asks. That one had completely slipped my mind. I add the two heads and tails, and draw a cloud of gas coming from one mouth, and sparks in the other. "Is thatâ€¦ two heads?"

"Yup. Two heads, one breathes the gas, the other one lights it up."

"Oh."

"Yeah. I honestly think Maguffin should get a Nadder, since they're so fast. A Zippleback for Dingwall because he wouldn't be able to focus on both heads, and Macintosh is vain, from what you said. And so are Nightmares, They'll love each other." I say sarcastically.

"What about the Gronkle? Does that one go to Berk alongside Toothless, orâ€¦?"

"No, they're too good with them. Everybody is strong there, they're Vikings. Just say you don't like that one, say you have a different option, for fairness reasons. Then I'll bring out Toothless, after everybody is defenseless."

"Ok. I'll bring these drawings to my mother. Take this to Berk, please. Don't let Toothless be shot. I need you here." And Merida hands me a scroll.

"Will do. Or, won't. I won't get shot, and I will bring it to Berk. That's right. I should be back tonight or tomorrow morning." She just giggles and heads to the door. "Hey, Merida?" she stops and turns around at the doorway.

"Yes, Hiccup?"

"Love you." I feel the heat rising to my cheeks. Merida just smiles and walks back to me. I feel a quick peck at my cheek, where the heat

sits.

"I love you too, Hiccup." She goes to walk away again, but I grab her elbow, and she turns back to me. I reach for her face, and before I know it, my lips are on hers. She tenses up, but relaxes into the kiss. After a few seconds, we break away, both smiling and red. I wait until I hear a horse's whinny, and then I get up and find my riding gear in the dark, and throw it on.

I step outside to see a sleeping toothless, and walk up to him and shake him awake. Within minutes, we are flying out into the dark abyss, heading to Berk.

It usually takes a week to go to the mainland and back on ship, I remember from one of Trader Johan's stories. It had been five days since the ship left port here, so it should be relatively close to Berk, but not quite there. About an hour before dawn, I spot a small flame on the horizon, illuminating the boat from Berk. It isn't moving, so I figure I can land on it.

After sending him well into the sky, I hop off of Toothless, and pull the cord, and feel the air catch in my 'wings', and slowly fly towards the Viking ship. Once we are almost there, where I can see the empty deck, I call Toothless to go back a little, into the darkness where he's safe. I manage a rough landing, rolling a little when I land on the deck. Within seconds, I'm held at sword point by two intimidating Vikings. One of which I recognize as my uncle, Spitelout, and the other one looks like Gobber, missing a leg, and with an interchangeable hand.

"Who are you and what is your purpose here?" Spitelout says, rather intimidating. If I didn't know him, I'd be pretty scared for a toothpick like myself.

"Calm down, guys. I have a message from Queen Elinor of Scotland. Where you left a few days ago. She forgot to mention something."

"Oh yeah, and what would that be?" Gobber says, sarcastically.

"Bring four dragons. A Nadder, Gronkle, Zippleback, and a Nightmare."

"For what? A dining delicacy?"

"No. We need them alive. They will be used for the betrothal."

"A live Monstrous Nightmare! That's nearly impossible!" Spitelout shouts at me, as I climb up the mast, getting an odd look from the other Viking.

As I reach the top of the mast, I can see Toothless not far off. I do a quick whistle, and see him making his way over. I turn down to Spitelout.

"Yeah, but you'll do it." I lean in a little, getting a close look at his face, remembering his weakness. His pride. "You'll do it if you want Snotlout to become King." His eyes turn to slits, and I smirk from beneath the flying mask.

I chuckle at my frustrated uncle, and turn to Gobber. "Turns out, using all ofâ€¦" I gesture to my entirety. "This. Wasn't that bad of a plan." I smirk and right as I finish, I hear the familiar whoosh of wings, and claws around my arms, and I'm taken into the rising sun, back to Merida, message delivered before Gobber could even recognize me.

By the time I get back, it's about noon, and both I and Toothless are tired from flying all night. I let Toothless settle down inside, and walk to Crone's Tooth. I look up at the towering rock. Merida says she's climbed it multiple times, and I don't see why I can't. I see a faintly beaten path, which leads to the opposite side of the rock, where it ends. I can see a faint foothold for a little bit up. I reach up, and grab it.

I make the final stretch, and I throw myself onto the top of the rock. It may have taken me an hour, but I have a strange sense of pride settling in my gut. No wonder Merida likes to climb this thing, it gives you a sense of accomplishment. Upon lying down, I realize I'm going to be covered in mist. Not really minding it, I peel off my shirt and lay it under my head as a pillow, and I feel the mist settling on my chest. I look up at the sky, and hear nothing but nature's hum. Closing my eyes, I let the birds chirping and the falling of water next to me lull me to sleep, away from all of the sadness, and thoughts of losing everything I love.

I feel a light kiss to my forehead and a delicate hand tracing along the muscles in my abdomen. I feel a pressure in my stomach, and feel the skin shiver and form goose bumps. I peak open my eye, and in my arms lies a figure with a sea of curly red hair and a childish smirk, as she drawing on my stomach with her fingernails.

"You know, Hic, it's rude to pretend to sleep while your girlfriend doodles on you."

"Yeah, but still, I was tiredâ€¦" Wait, did she say "Girlfriend?"

"Yep." Another circle around my bellybutton. "Is that not what we are?"

"Well, we got past the I like you's, past the dates, and past the I love yous, so yeah, I guess we are."

"I just wish we had more than three weeks to stay that way." Merida says sadly, and I can hear her voice start to shake. I don't know what compels me to do it, but I pick a curl from her hair and start toying with it.

"Hey, hey, hey. Its fine, Merida. I promise I will love you, long after your betrothal." I stand up, trying to calm her, and seemingly have achieved it.

"As will I, Hiccup." We just sit there, staring at nothing but watching everything. She's absentmindedly toying with a belt loop on my pants, and I'm mindlessly twirling her hair. I stop, and look at her. She must have noticed me stopping, because she does too and meets my eyes, forest green meeting sky blue. It isn't until my hand finds its way to her cheek that I notice we had gotten closer.

She smiles and slowly presses her lips to where my smile met my cheek. When she opens her eyes, and that look is on her face. I realize what it is, and a twist in my gut ensues.

\_She's flirting with me!\_ Well, princess, two can play at that game. As she looks at me, I can't take it anymore. I grab her waist and pull her in, getting a breathless gasp from Merida, but I just flash the smirk that had her stumbling for words, and press my mouth to hers.

I get an immediate response from Merida, and she grabs the nape of my neck and pulls us even closer. This kiss was less cute and chaste, and hungrier. I feel a poke at my lips, and we deepen the kiss even further. Merida makes some sort of moan into the kiss, and slides her hand down my back.

We resentfully pull apart for the need of oxygen, but that wasn't that high on either of our priorities. Within seconds, the redhead is back on me, and I pull her flush against myself. My hands suddenly get a mind of their own, and start to move. One finds itself in her wild mane, the other slipping down past her waist, and lay to rest right beneath her lower back. Merida slides her other hand down, and starts toying with the belt loop again, but with a little more mind than a few minutes ago. Her other hand seems to wander up towards my bare chest. I would be completely lying if I said I didn't want to mirror her actions, but I kept my hands off her front. But I see nothing wrong with the back.

Yet another break for oxygen leaves our foreheads together, bodies still as close as they can physically get without intertwining. "Merida, you know most people would be done with the make out session a while ago." Confusion wipes across her eyes, but I just smirk again. "I guess we aren't most people." And go for another kiss, long, although much shorter than the past two.

"You know, I wouldn't mind," Merida says open-endedly, with the flirty look, but this time, there was a more intense fire in her eyes. That fire, as wild as her hair, is want. And before I can say anything else, she dives right into another kiss, both of our hands exploring our new boundaries.

Tada you get a makeout scene. I had previously typed up to the eighth chapter, and wanted to get it uploaded. So to everyone who thought I typed up 8 chapters in one night:

**\*\*I\*\* \_\*\*Wish\*\*\_**

But really, thank you and I should be done with it in a few more chapters.

## 10. Chapter 10

I wake up to the evening sun, proving we only had a nap. I look down, and see vicious curls and a bare back laying into my currently bare front. I close my eyes, confused, but then all the recollections from the past few ours smack into me like a brick. Intense make out sessions are rather tiring for both parties, apparently.

I smile, and Merida shifts a little further into me, mumbling in her

light sleep. The rock we lay on is warm, from the soft rays of the day. I stretch my loose arm, reaching out and meeting an article of clothing. I don't know who it belonged to, but I don't care. Merida makes a little humming noise, and sighs, which is something I've noticed she does right before she wakes up. Seconds later, she stretches a little and turns to me, and peeks open her eyes.

"Hi." She whispers, and I just laugh.

"Hi yourself."

"Oh shut up. I gotta go home soon." She sighs dissapointedly, and frowns. I just tighten the grip on her shoulder, as if in a hug.

"It's ok, we still have a week. The boys get here, when, in 5 days?"

"Yeah." Another sigh from the princess.

"Well, let's get moving. The sooner you're home, the sooner you're asleep, the sooner you're awake, which means the sooner you see me."

"You're greedy, but you're my greedy dragon boy."

"Dragon man. I'm you're dragon man." I smile as I stretch and pick up the princess, carrying her bridal style to the edge of the rock, where I call Toothless to pick us up.

"Oh really?" she jests as we climb on Toothless, smirking. Once we're on safely, I notice Angus isn't down there. I'm about to ask her about it, but she gets me first. "Are true dragon menâ€¦ ticklish?" Oh no.

"Merida no no no no-" But she grips my sides and starts wiggling her fingers around, letting the slow curls of her hair dance on my shoulders, tickling them as well.

"I DIDN'T THINK SO!" She shouts into the air, as I sit curled up, squealing like a little girl at the touches.

"Merâ€¦ Meridaâ€¦ no no stopâ€¦"

"Nope!" she goes for my neck with her hands and my head curls back at the feeling and I wiggle around, breathless at the tickling assault. She finally stops once we get near the castle, and I catch my breath with her.

"Thatâ€¦ wasâ€¦ really, trulyâ€¦ rather rude, Mer." I breathe out between gasps.

"Nuh uhâ€¦ that wasâ€¦ absolutelyâ€¦ hilarious." She says staggered. I turn around, and see a grinning red head, and I just lean over and plop a quick kiss on her.

"You're hilarious."

"I know." She says, straightening up into her self-dubbed 'royal position'.

"You're so vain."

"You're not much better, Mr. 'Are you looking at my glorious muscles?"

"Cause you were!" she so was.

"Was not!"

"Was too!"

"Nuh uh!"

"Uh Huh!"

"Fine. But you were staring at me in the forest that one time, and at sunrise last week."

"I know." I just smirk at the princess as Toothless lands at the edge of the tree line. "I'll see you tomorrow, princess."

"As soon as possible, dragon boy." And she skips off to the castle, smirking.

"That's dragon MAN to you!" I shout back, and hear her little giggle as she pushes open the door and disappears.

5 days later, I sit watching the sun rise from my rooftop. I hear a rustle and I immediately hop onto Toothless, and land on the other side of the wall of shrubbery.

"Hey dragon boy." Grins a cheeky red head.

"My princess."

"Oh shut up, hic. To the beach?" I sigh; knowing today is our last day together, without her being betrothed. But I have a way to stop that. So I smile at the princess.

"Yeah." We make our way to the beach, following the rapidly rising sun. We plop on the beach, and she settles into my arms, sitting in between my legs.

"Can you go over everything again? I don't wanna forget anything and have it mess up, getting you or toothless hurt and me stuck to any dude but you."

"Yeah. Ok, so when the boys come, Berk will take the dragons to the new ring, right?"

"Yeah. And I sit watching, and say something about how I don't like the Gronkle, right?"

"Say that it's too lumpy, or it offends you or something. But say that you have an alternative, one that Berk has never seen, only heard about. Then I'll bring out Toothless, who won't have his gear on."

"Oh, mother wanted for you to handle the dragons in the ring, so



you're gonna have to be there." Crap. Guess I'll just sit with Toothless, beforehand.

"Ok. I'll be with Toothless."

"I figured as such, you big lump."

"Ouch. That hurt." I feign offense. She giggles, but her face falls.

"But once Berk wimps out and the others fail, Mother will just make me choose another activity."

"Mer, you gotta trust me. I'll make sure that won't happen." Small yet strong arms curl around my waist, and Merida lays her head on my shoulders.

"I know. I'm just scared. I mean, what if it doesn't work?"

"Then I deal with it when it occurs. Now, let's just forget about it and enjoy the few hours until all hell breaks loose."

"Fine." We just lay there, in each other's arms, not a word spoken, but so much said between us, until the distant sound of bells take me back to the pain of reality. I look down at Merida, who dozed off in the past 10 minutes, sound asleep in the crook of my arm, snoring quietly, face at peace. I smile at the princess' un-royal ways, and shift a little, making sure not to wake the sleeping beauty. I sit up, and manage to get the Scot in my arms, and start carrying her back home, and I make it to where the trail meets the beach when she does her signature hum and sigh, and twists a little, but suddenly stops. I just chuckle to myself, knowing she's awake, but not wanting to break the moment. So I walk the path, carrying my princess like a child, and her snuggled up against my chest, head on my shoulder, hair everywhere. Once I feel we're nearing the end of the trail, I shift Merida to face me, who rubs her eyes and looks at me with big blue eyes. Half awake, she yawns and looks at me.

"You have a really nice heart, Hiccup."

"What?" I say, not knowing how to take the compliment. Merida giggles like a child, but I'm still confused. "Thanks, I think."

"You do. It's very comforting, and really steady. It almost put me back to sleep." The princess says, a little more awake then before.

"Glad I can put that on the list of things I can ruin you with." I chuckle, thinking of them all.

"Like what?"

"You know, things that make you all awkward or, apparently, sleepy. My heart beat makes you tired, there's this one face I pull sometimes that makes you bright red, and my bare stomach can get you to stutter." A long silence, and stare off, ensues after. She looks at me with a deadpan look, and me with a knowing look. I give her the look that makes her red, and she immediately retorts.

"I hate you."

"You love me."

"I know."

"Listen, Mer, you gotta go get ready. It sounds like people are here, so I'll see you soon in the ring, ok?"

"Yeah." She sighs to the ground.

"Hey, don't get too sad on me. You and I are gonna be fine. Everyone else will be too." Eh, maybe. I'll probably have Toothless toss Snotlout around in the ring.

"Promise?"

"Promise." I pull Merida into a passionate kiss, before letting go and watching her go to the castle. She turns at the door, and I just smile and motion for her to go on before heading back for Toothless.

An hour later, I'm hiding in the tree line with a tired, sleepy dragon behind me watching Merida tell off my uncle, father, and Gobber about how she doesn't like the Gronkle. They begrudgingly take it back to the boat, and lead the others to the ring. I watch them lock the three up, which I feel very bad about, and wait for them to head into the great hall before leading Toothless into the ring. I had taken more time than expected getting all my riding gear off Toothless, who suddenly became very protective of the metal and leather which adorned his back. It usually only takes seconds to get it on or off, but playing chase the dragon, which happens to be the fastest dragon known to mankind, it took a while. But I put Toothless in the stable/ring thing, and close myself in there with him. The individual rooms were made of stone, like Berk's ring, but the top third of the separating walls weren't there, as if like a stable door, letting the dragons see each other. I explained to Toothless, who had gotten a better sense of human language recently, that I wasn't here to hurt any of the dragons, and for them not to kill anyone. The dragons watched as I donned my riding mask, so I know they'll recognize me in it. After 5 minutes of reassurance and scratches, I convinced Toothless to stay, but I had to forfeit my spare tunic to calm the overprotective dragon. I snuck away into the great hall, and stood in the shadows, masked by the all black riding suit and helmet, and watched the chiefs present their sons.

Macintosh was painted with blue paint, and girls everywhere except from Berk and Merida were swooning over him. Next was Maguffin, who just stood there silently, and smiled at Merida sheepishly. Dingwall just stared at air the whole time. But Berk, Berk whooped and hollered at the presentation of Snotlout. Merida looked disgusted with his flirtatious looks, as vigilant as ever, and his bodybuilder poses. He looked like a pompous jerk, really.

Astrid sighed and smacked her face behind him. She had grown up, looking tall, powerful, and, well, beautiful. But not in that way, he had Merida. She was pretty in the way of a friend who moved away, I was proud how well she had turned out. I felt as if my leaving allowed that. Ruff and Tuff were fighting as usual, but they were silent, so I guess that was their view of respect. \_They're trying.\_

Fishlegs watched all around, intrigued at the new place, and seemed to notice me, masked, hiding in the shadows. I just shook my head as to say 'no', and he turned his face. But I caught the gaze of Merida, whose eyes lit up, but had to look away for some reason.

"It is customary for the princess to determine the challenge." The Queen's voice radiates outwards, before she turns to Merida. "What shall it be?" she says, knowing.

"I know some of you may have seen the dragons brought here by Berk, and I would like to say that I am a very strong, dangerous person, and to win my heart, I must be subdued. So, naturally, I'd like to give you some training for that. Dragons are the first thing that came to mind when it comes to strong and dangerous. You will be working with dragons; actually, you will be training dragons."

A collective gasp echoed throughout the Great Hall, and a few men dropped their weapons in bewilderment.

"What do you mean, \_training dragons\_?" shouted Snotlout, who is about the color of a sheet. "Why not kill the things?"

"Because, Snotface," Merida's mother gave her a horrified look, while Merida pretended not to know his name.

"Uh, your highness in all your beauty," Merida and I both scoffed at his words. "It's actually Snotlout."

"Anyways, I am fierce, like a dragon. I am strong, like a dragon, dangerous even. But most importantly, I am lethal, like a dragon. And I assume you don't have it in plans to kill me? Because that would greatly hinder your chances at my hand in marriage. And if you plan to earn my trust, would you pull a weapon on me? I do not think so. Therefore, absolutely ZERO weapons will be allowed near the dragons. We can't have cheaters. If I, my family, or anyone else sees a weapon, even a small knife, you will eliminate your whole tribe for the chance of my hand. So you will learn to cope with your chosen dragon without defense, as you will learn to cope with me, if you succeed in winning my heart and hand." Merida says, with all the confidence in the world, while everyone but King Fergus and I watch with bewilderment and fear, as the Princess puts a little of her mind out to Snotlout. And the result was fantastic. Snotlout was obviously crushed by her remark, and by fear and respect for the royal red head.

"Ok then." Is his hushed reply.

"Are there any more questions? No? None? Ok, now, I will meet you out in the ring in exactly half an hour. Pile your weapons here, and go." Merida ended curtly, and glanced at me, and smiled slightly and nodded. I returned the favor right before I slipped out, and went back to the ring, right before the Clans and Berk made it there. I can hear the cheers of the crowd, before Merida shuts them up.

"Who shall go first?" The Queen lightly says, and is returned with an almost deafening roar of each clan screaming their name. Merida stands up, and they all are shushed. "Macintosh will go first." Nobody dared question the princess, as the tall, lanky but muscular boy with a wild black mare approached the ring, hands shaking a little.

"I'm ready." I smile and release the cocky dragon for the cocky boy. If they knew how to get along, they'd be great companions for each other. But the Monstrous Nightmare bursts out of its cage, flaming body running around the ring as I wait in the cage. Young Macintosh just stands there, frozen in shock. The Nightmare locked eyes with the boy, and slowly approached, growling.

Young Macintosh suddenly thought it would be a genius idea to attack the dragon, forcing it to subdue. Obviously not the right plan. The nightmare lit itself on fire, and charged Macintosh, and went to strike with his tail. But the dragon I dubbed Hookfang in my mind stopped his fiery bludgeon inches from the boys head, and instead set his glorious locks ablaze. He stood there, confused for a moment, but soon felt the heat too close to his head, and made a mad dash for the water trough and plunged his head in.

"Macintosh, you're out." Called Merida, much to the distaste of his clan. The boy sulked out, hair smoldering with one strand still lit. He reached up and pinched it out of existence with his fingers. "Next, Maguffin"

Moments later, the big hulk of the not-quite-Fishlegs-but-almost boy stepped out, and I lifted the latch for the Nadder after petting her a little. Stormfly was just a big old softy, honestly. But I looked out after soothing Toothless, only to see Merida on the brink of laughter, and Young Macintosh pinned to the wooden door by the scruff of his kilt. He just silently walks out, leaving the Zippleback for Dingwall and Toothless for Snotlout. Although Snotface fit him much better.

"Iâ€¦ I'm readyâ€¦ I think." Mumbled Dingwall, his crazy hair everywhere to match his crazy eyes. I let loose the Zippleback, and Dingwall immediately grabbed a handful of water and threw it on a dragon head, much like training all those years ago. But he made the same mistake I did, and dampened the gaseous head, which immediately spewed the foul smelling gas in his face. When the smoke cleared, Dingwall sat confused in a pile of his own vomit.

"Eww, Dingwall, you're out. And someone please clean that up?" shouted Merida, voicing the thoughts of everyone there. After the vomit was gone, and I pulled the Zippleback back into its cage, I ran over hand motions with Toothless, and heard heavy footsteps enter the ring.

"You know, babe, I got this, and I'll personally present the trained dragon of whatever that dragon is to you, and I'll let you bask in my hero status." Snotlout flirted with Merida. I looked at Toothless, and added in another motion, just because Snotlout.

"Uh huh, sure. Knock yourself out. Please." Merida said, with double meaning.

"I am ready to conquer the mysterious-" Which is about when Toothless jumped out, teeth bared, growling. "Night fury." Snotlout squeaked at the end. Right about now, Berkians realized it too.

Calls of "NIGHT FURY!" "KILL IT" rang through the air, but Merida shut them up fast.

"NOBODY kills a dragon. Snotlout will train him for me." and all the Vikings cowered in fear. Except one pompous, cocky moron. Snotlout.

"I'll train this dragon so hard, it'll get food for us, your highness." Snotlout said, as if the unholy offspring of lightning and death was just a mouse. I sat in the shadows, directing Toothless' every move with signals, and I decide it's time for the one Snotlout earned by his little comment earlier. I make a gesture as if I'm blowing a kiss, but Toothless understands, and sends a small plasma blast, just enough to knock off his helmet. Snotlout immediately screamed like a little girl, and bolted for the exit, begging to be let out. Someone snatches him up, and Toothless settles in the dragon stable where I reside, and I snap on his gear. I step out, in full armor, and can practically hear the confusion.

"Who are you, and what is your purpose here, boy?" Merida calls out, like we had practiced. I just nod, and release the dragons, except toothless. Easily, I gain their trust thanks to Toothless' talking to, and they all trust me. I snap, and Toothless bounds out of the stable, bumping into my arm, and I just laugh and hop onto the saddle. Merida says with growing fake anger over the wild murmurs of the crowd, "I said, who are you?" she says, teeth gritted in false irritation. I see the faintest of smiles on her.

"Why, I'm terribly sorry, my princess." I hear whispers from the crowd at my use of 'my princess', and a glare from her mother. I pull my helmet off, revealing and meeting eye to eye with a nonetheless shocked Fergus and Elinor, a giddy Merida, and three slack jawed triplets. I turn to my tribe, my father, and declare myself loudly. "My name is Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the third." A gasp came from the entirety of Berk, and I just smiled at their shocked reactions, which resulted in the three clans giving the island tribe a weird look. "And I believe, Berk, youknow Snotlout is the heir, considering he's the cousin to the deceased heir, Stoick's son." Now all the Scots, especially the royal family, were confused.

"Hiccup, what do you mean?" said Merida, right above a whisper.

I just smiled warmly at the princess, and turned to my flabbergasted father. "Hi dad." And with that, the Viking chief slumped down in his chair, passed out, and Gobber looked so happy he could explode.

"Hiccup?" "Hiccup!" Gobber screamed, while my dad tried to regain his consciousness.

"Yes, yes, not dead tada. Now excuse me, I think I just won myself my girlfriend's hand in marriage." I turn to said red head, who stared blankly and all of a sudden it clicked in her mind and she started screaming and running over to me, throwing open the door to the ring, ignoring her mother's warnings of the dragons, and crashing into me with a crazed hug, laughing and crying and being an emotional mess, and everyone just watches onto us as I grab her by her waist and we crash our lips together for a quick, but passionate kiss. Happily, Merida turns to her family, mainly her dad.

"Can we keep him?" she teases, rubbing a hand on my head as if I was a dog.

"Well, if he doesn't bite." Jokes back her father, and with a happy grin he looks at me, and I feel like there's everything right with the world. Toothless sees her, and butts his head under her other hand, demanding a scratch.

"I think he wants to go flying." I say, and at the word Toothless perks up, and bounds around the ring, overly excited.

"Let's go!" shouts Merida as she hops onto Toothless' saddle, and waits for me eagerly.

"Sirâ€|" I start to ask Fergus, but he chuckles and waves us off, turning to Elinor and kissing her cheek, much to the disgust of the triplet princes. I hop on, sliding my feet in the stirrups, and we take off, into the sunset, lopsided grins on all three of our faces.

End  
file.